

Leys News

Delivered FREE to over 5000 homes across the Leys

... Vacancy ...

Leys News are looking to appoint a Business and Community Development Manager from March 2010

See page 14 for more details

Happy New Year!

Leys News would like to wish all our readers, advertisers and sponsors a very happy New Year! The last twelve months have been a tough time for businesses and homeowners and we are all looking forward to a brighter 2010.

FOR ONE Greater Leys family, Christmas came a couple of weeks early when we were delighted to be able to surprise them with some special Christmas goodies! Michelle Polley and her two children Lewis and Joshua have had a tough couple of years, and when they sent in their entry telling us why they should win some Christmas treats, little did they know that they would be our lucky winners!

Thanks to generous support from Wilkinsons, OCHA, Thorntons, Frankie and Bennys, The Oxford Playhouse and others sponsors, Leys News were able to present Michelle with a hamper of goodies to make sure they had a happy Christmas.

Michelle said: "This has made our Christmas, it's a lovely surprise!"

One of our other winners was Shannon Pitson and her sisters from Pegasus Road who wanted to win some Christmas surprises for their grandparents. In her letter to

Leys News, Shannon aged ten said: "Me and my three sisters would like to give my Nan and Gramp a nice treat for Christmas because they always try to spoil us even though they don't have much. This would be the best gift we could give them to say thank you for everything they have done and given us."

Our other finalist was Gillian Woodley who lives in Cherry Close with her partner and their four children. Gillian is a student at Brookes University and has a lot of mouths to feed! In her letter she said: "It would make the kids faces smile to win a prize. Only my partner works which makes money tight. I am setting up in business as a childminder to bring more money in but I have to fit this is around going to Brookes to study psychology."

Both our runners up win hampers donated by Walls. Our ten finalists were also presented with a Christmas cake from Wilkinsons.



A Xmas Hamper for Lewis and Joshua and their mum Michelle

Making Oxford cleaner and greener

Oxford City Council issued over one hundred fixed penalty notices during a two week campaign for a Cleaner, Greener City.

The campaign was launched to tackle litter in the city centre and to reduce the amount of cigarette butts, chewing gum and paper being dropped in the city. The 117 fines were issued by Environmental Enforcement Officers, Street Wardens and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs).

The fines are £80 but £55 if you pay within 14 days. If people fail to pay the £80 fine, they may face fines at the Magistrates Court of up to £2,500.

Councillor John Tanner, Board Member for a Cleaner, Greener City, says: "The number of fines our enforcement officers issued in two weeks sends a strong message to the public."

"A big thank you to everyone who is working together to make the centre of Oxford cleaner..."

Continued on page 2

National award for Leys drugs team

A DRUGS CRACKDOWN has earned The Leys Community Against Drugs Team a national award and a £10,000 prize.

The three day campaign on drugs in Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys in March led to 14 arrests following raids on ten homes, as well as the seizure of large amounts of crack cocaine, cannabis plants and thousands of pounds in cash.

The team was nominated in the Community Engagement category, and the event was designed to help deal with the Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys communities' concerns around drug misuse and highlight that the area is a good place to live.

Linda Ludlow, of Oxford Safer Communities Partnership, said: "It was a fantastic event and it gave representatives from agencies the opportunity to meet local people who live on the estate and share experiences and build on the good work that had been achieved."

"There were all sorts of different stands offering information to children and parents about the dangers of drugs. Seeing offenders completing community payback at the event really brought the message home to kids."

As a result of the event, enforcement agencies around Oxford worked together to share intelligence, which led to a large number of new drug warrants being executed on the estate.

On the announcement of the



Photograph: Oxford Mail

finalists, Home Office Minister Alan Campbell said:

"This year we received more than 200 nominations for drug workers and teams who work tirelessly every day to help tackle drug misuse and change lives."

"Drug use and drug related crime have fallen in recent years. Such impressive results could not have been achieved without the dedication of the many professionals and volunteers. Their work helps reduce drug related crime in our communities; increases the number of drug misusers entering and finishing treatment and ensures that there is tough enforcement of the law."

FREE training for Community Journalists

Starting in January, Leys News will be offering five FREE training sessions for anyone who has an interest in journalism.

Our training sessions will cover writing and interview skills and will provide a basic introduction for anyone who is keen to work in newspapers.

After completing the training we offer Community Journalists the chance to write stories and articles for the paper and expenses will be reimbursed.

This is a great opportunity to develop writing skills and find out more about what it is like to work for a newspaper.



Training will start at 11.30am on Tuesday January 19 at the Leys News offices in Kingsfisher Green, Greater Leys.

You are also welcome to contact us if you would like to write or take photos for Leys News but are unable to attend the training sessions.

editor@leysnews.co.uk or ring 01865 711756

This course is being sponsored by Oxford Brookes University

OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

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Leys News is a not-for-profit business dedicated to providing news and information to the whole community. We are not affiliated to any political party, and we operate an equal opportunities policy. We encourage any resident to get involved in our work.

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Editorial

Happy New Year!

I HOPE THAT you have all enjoyed a lovely festive season with your friends and family and now, like the team here at Leys News, are rested, relaxed and looking forward to the year ahead.

With 2009 firmly behind us, the new year is the perfect time to re-think certain aspects of our lives and make some positive changes that can make a real difference to ourselves and the people around us. For one group of people, January sees the start of the next Leys News Community Journalism Training Course, and the chance for volunteers to learn how our newspaper is made and how to write some stories and features for our pages. The free course is a great opportunity for anyone who is keen to learn about basic journalism and could be the first step towards a new career for some!

I am hoping that 2010 will see yet more developments and improvements across The Leys, and that we can all

continue to focus on all the good and positive things that are going on around us. The Leys News team will, as ever, be on hand to report all the local news, views and opinions and we are also hoping that the newspaper will continue to improve and grow into an even bigger success story for our community this year.

Please do keep in touch with me and let me know about anything that is happening in your part of The Leys. Without our readers and our valuable 'eyes and ears' we run the risk of missing important stories and events in your neighbourhood, so if you make only one New Year resolution this year, make a promise to email me editor@leysnews.co.uk and send me your letters or story ideas!

Happy New Year once again, I am really looking forward to the year ahead...and to hearing from you all very soon!

Best wishes

Sarah

Leys News Drop-in
at the Boiler Room Cafe

10.30am, 12th January

Come along and tell us your news,
or comment on how we can improve the paper.

Making Oxford cleaner and greener – Continued from page 1

...“We want people to stop dropping litter and make the city centre a no go area for litter, chewing gum and cigarette butts.

"Our enforcement officers will still be patrolling the streets, so please bin it unless you want to risk a fine."
Oxford Commander, Supt Andy Murray, says: "We are happy to contribute to Oxford City Council's litter campaign with our PCSOS.

"All of our neighbourhood teams are currently running Operation Confidence, designed to tackle anti-social behaviour. Littering is part of unacceptable behaviour and police community support officers have been encouraged to use the full range of powers available to them."

Councillor Keith Mitchell, Leader of Oxfordshire County Council, says: "Highways maintenance is the county council's

responsibility but the city council has the role for street cleaning and we work very closely together.

"We are both committed to making the city centre as clean and green as possible as part of wider plans to transform the city centre and make it a better place for pedestrians.

"The majority of people take personal responsibility for their litter and put it in to the bin rather than dropping it on the floor. It would be marvellous if everyone could do that."

Environmental Enforcement Officers, Street Wardens and PCSOs can impose on-the-spot fines to anyone caught dropping litter, discarding rubbish from a vehicle, throwing away cigarette ends or chewing gum as well as fly-posting and graffiti.

New year message from Andrew Smith MP



I WOULD LIKE to wish all Leys residents a very happy new year. I believe our community has big strengths and I am sure the coming year will see us building on the achievements we have already made.

The opening of the Co-operative Nursery was a great event and both I and my wife Val enjoyed meeting the

children, staff and parents.

I am delighted that the hard work of residents and councillors paid off and that we managed to open this much-needed nursery.

And there are many other things to be proud of on our estate, things that we have all worked hard to get. The out-of-hours service now run by our Health Centre, the improvements to our play areas, and the ongoing success of the children's centre and the estates' schools, are all examples of the excellent facilities we have access to on the Leys. The positive outcomes from the first Ofsted visit to the Oxford Academy are particularly good to see.

I am always impressed at the number of voluntary groups set up on the two estates and am full of admiration for the work they do. They provide fabulous services to Leys residents and we are very lucky to have so many committed people running these clubs, from boys' football to bingo. I know that the work of the two Churches is also very valued in our community.

On my regular calling rounds I am always heartened to see how positive so many residents are about the Leys. We have a lot to celebrate in our community and I am certain that we have a great deal to look forward to in 2010.

Competition Corner

Win a MP3 Player!

This issue we have a musical wordsearch for you! Trisha from our Trisha's Beats column has come up with the following 20 words to do with music. The lucky winner will win a 2GB mini mp3 player.

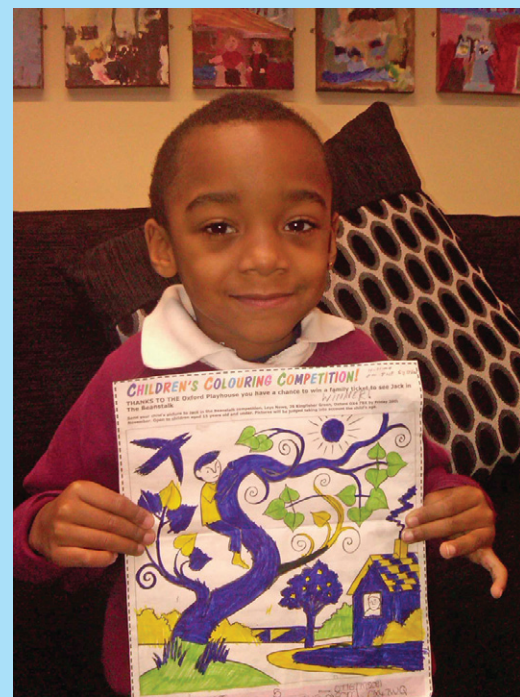
Album
Guitar
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Earphones
Ipod
Musician
Stereo
Concert
Band
Instruments
Mtv
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Singer
Tune

T O Q U S T A E B M B J S B N
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W R X U D T W O M V F Y M S M
I E A R P H O N E S V Z U S O
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J S Y J M N P K K W Y U L Z N
T I I O H Y I D Y R D E A A N
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E G R O Z R H M U U Y U W O R
R M U S I C I A N V O K W B C
T M I K X V L I D N A B R C Y

Name: Phone:

Address:

Congratulations!



Above: Omari Thomas, age 5, is the winner of last issue's coloring competition. He wins a family ticket to see Jack and the Beanstalk at the Oxford Playhouse.



Left: Ali Shoaib is the winner of our micro scooter competition.

On track to be a winner

By Kevin Dyer

While most teenage girls are spending their Sunday mornings lying in bed dreaming of pop stars or boyfriends, watching television or updating their Facebook status, one Blackbird Leys girl is heading for the race track.



Amy Chandler with her dad Dave

AMY CHANDLER, 16, spends most weekends at Standlake Arena competing in her racing Mini Cooper, with the support and help of her family. She is keen to make people understand that there are lots of positive aspects of living in The Leys, and has found that her racing hobby has

become a great way to keep her occupied.

Amy has lived in Blackbird Leys all her life and has been racing for about a year. She got bitten by the racing bug after watching her Dad and friends race. Her hobby has become quite a family affair as her Dad

Dave and friends help to prepare her car and keep it running, and the rest of her family are her most devoted fans.

Amy admitted that her friends think she is a bit crazy as her hobby is potentially quite dangerous. She said: "They all realise how much I enjoy it

because no matter what, I never miss a meeting."

When it comes to school and homework, Amy added that her racing doesn't really distract her because the meetings always happen at weekends so her hobby fits around her schooling and social life really well. Amy intends to stay on at school and also has a job in the catering industry.

Racing has become a large part of Amy's life in the last year, and is something that she really looks forward to at the end of each week. She already has more than 20 trophies from racing.

Amy has enjoyed learning to race, and added: "Racing is a great way to meet people and make new friends. There are other girls who race at Standlake mainly in the juniors class, and they are just as good as the boys."

Amy admits that her hobby keeps her busy and focussed and thinks there should be more things for young people of her age who live on The Leys to do.

She said that young people in the area often get a bad press because of things that have happened in the past.

Amy herself was once caught up in an incident that saw her being arrested for being carried in a stolen car that was driven by someone else. The car was involved in an accident in Reading and Amy spent the night in a police cell.

Amy added: "Some people never drop or forgive things that have happened in the past. There should be more things to do, and I feel that funding and resources should come from the government or The National Lottery, not the taxpayer."

Oxford City Council wins another award



OXFORD CITY COUNCIL has won The Carbon Trust Innovation Award 2009 for its innovative use of low carbon technology in the public sector category.

This award was won for the development and implementation of our ambitious carbon management programme - Getting Our House in Order.

The programme has led to the adoption of tough targets that ensure the delivery of significant Co2 reduction - 25 per cent by March 2011 and 10 per cent in 2010 alone.

This is the Council's third award in recent month's and follows the Energy Saving Trust Fleet Hero Awards for 'Smarter Driving,' and

the Project Manager of the Year at the BCS and Computing UK IT Industry Awards which was awarded to Jeff Ridgley.

Councillor John Tanner, Board Member for a Cleaner, Greener City, says: "I am thrilled that the hard work of officers and councillors has been recognised with this award."

"We have worked hard to reduce our carbon emission both within the Council and encourage others across the city to reduce their carbon footprint."

"I am absolutely delighted that this is our third award in three weeks and it is a testament to the hard work of Council employees."

Tom Delay, Chief Executive, the Carbon Trust, says: "As the UK

looks to develop and deploy new low carbon solutions to tackle climate change, the breadth and depth of innovation we have seen this year is deeply encouraging."

"Whilst many of the organisations that we looked displayed innovative approaches to cutting carbon emissions, the winning entries such as Oxford City Council stood out for their industry leadership and potential to be replicated more widely. This shows the fantastic opportunity for organisations to thrive as Britain moves to a low carbon economy."

The Getting Our House in Order initiative is complemented by a wide approach to encourage renewable energy generation via an agreement on a wind turbine site with Partnerships for Renewable (PFR) and a planning requirement for 20 per cent on-site renewable energy production for larger developments.

The award also commended our 'Oxford is My World' initiative which supports and encourages low carbon approaches for householders, community groups and local businesses.

The awards were judged by a panel of experts including David MacKay, Chief Scientific Advisor of the Department of Energy and Climate Change; Tim Smit, co-founder and Chief Executive of the Eden Project; Damian Carrington, Head of Environment at the Guardian; Chris Mottershead, Vice Principal of Research and Innovations at Kings College

London; Dick Strawbridge, 'eco king'; Jeremy Webb, Editor of The New Scientist; and Tom Delay, Chief Executive of the Carbon Trust.

This year's nationwide hunt attracted submissions from nearly 250 of the UK's most inspiring innovators in the development, deployment and use of low carbon technology solutions. The judges rigorously assessed each application against a range of strict criteria including genuine innovation, carbon saving potential, novel application and commercial potential.

Oxford City Council employee Jeff Ridgley won the Project Manager of the Year at the BCS and Computing UK IT Industry Awards after project managing the Council's customer relationship management (CRM) implementation.

The award is new venture that merges the BCS IT Industry Awards and Computing Awards for Excellence and creates a platform for the entire IT profession to showcase and celebrate best practice, innovation and excellence. The Energy Saving Trust Fleet Hero Awards for 'Smarter Driving,' was given in recognition of the council's work in training over 300 staff in efficient driving techniques in March of this year.

The Fleet Hero Awards aim to highlight best practice in fleet management. The awards aim to acknowledge organisations that are addressing climate change by reducing carbon emissions from business travel.

New name for Night Shelter

OXFORD NIGHT SHELTER'S is to be renamed Oxford Homeless Pathways. The change has been made to reflect the extensive range of services provided for homeless people in Oxford.

A spokesman said: "Our high quality and effective range of services will remain unchanged. Oxford Homeless Pathways will continue to provide a variety of emergency and second stage accommodation, support planning and resettlement, training, education, activities, substance misuse and mental health input, and links to other services."

O'Hanlon House, Julian Housing and Oxford Homeless Medical Fund will retain their existing names as separate services managed and coordinated by Oxford Homeless Pathways. Through our various sites, we will continue to be 'a place of change' for homeless people in Oxford."

O'Hanlon House supports clients to address why they are homeless, and to help them avoid becoming homeless again in the future. Staff provide a range of services for people aged 25 and over, including direct access emergency accommodation, advice and information, training, education and activities, and resettlement support.

Julian Housing provide second-stage supported housing on a referral-only basis for people aged 25 years or over. Services are designed for people who have been homeless and could benefit from additional support before they are able to sustain independent accommodation. At the time of referral, they may be homeless, living in vulnerable housing or first stage accommodation or newly released from prison.

The Oxford Homeless Medical Fund raises donations to support welfare and medical services for homeless people in Oxford. OHMF's primary beneficiary is Luther Street Medical Centre.

The Centre is open to anyone in Oxford who is homeless or vulnerably housed, and is not currently registered with an Oxford City GP. Oxford Homeless Pathways will continue to support and facilitate other regular and occasional projects, such as the annual Oxford Sleep Out, which fundraises for Oxford agencies that support homeless people. Further information is available by visiting www.oxhop.org.uk

Thousands swim for free

NEW FIGURES RELEASED by the Government have shown an increase in the number of people taking advantage of the free swimming initiative.

During the three-month period (July to September) the city's pools recorded over 8,000 free swims taken by people aged 60 and over - up by more than 1000 on the first quarter.

A total of 8,349 free swims have been taken by people in Oxford through the £140million free swimming initiative.

A total of 44,832 free swims have been recorded in the city since the scheme started in April.

Councillor Bob Timbs, Board Member for Leisure and Sport, says: "I'm delighted that so many people are using these free swims. This figures shows how the scheme is tapping into a desire among people to get active."

All of Oxford City Council's pools are involved in the scheme and anyone aged 60 and over or 16 and under can swim free by registering at their local Centre. Free swimming sessions are only available during the public sessions at swimming pools.

A total of 5.9 million free swims were taken across the UK between July and September, compared with 4.4 million during the first quarter, with more than 250 local authorities currently signed up to the scheme.

The scheme is being jointly funded by five government departments, and is being delivered in partnership with local authorities, the Local Government Association, Sport England and the Amateur Swimming Association.

People can still register for the free swims by collecting a free Slice card from any of our leisure centres Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre, Blackbird Leys Pool, Barton Pool, Ferry Sports Centre, and Temple Cowley Pool and Fitness Centre. Just complete an application form, show some proof of your date of birth. You can also swim for free at Hinksey Outdoor Pool which is open between May and September.

To find out more visit www.oxford.gov.uk/leisure or contact your local Centre on 0844 8933 222.



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SPAR wishes all our customers a Happy New Year!



OPEN 7AM TILL 10PM - 7 DAYS A WEEK

Magical entertainment at BMW

By Sarah Edwards

Creation Theatre has triumphed with their latest production, bringing magical enchantment to audiences once again.



Laura Sanchez as Bella in Creation Theatre Company's *Beauty and the Beast*. Photo by Judie Waldmann

THE WONDERFUL 100 year-old Spiegeltent was the setting for *Beauty and the Beast*, and if you haven't had the chance to go to the Oxford BMW plant and see it yet there is still time as performances will run until January 16.

Creation's brand new production is by Daniel Bye and is directed by Sarah Punshon. This husband and wife team are both new to Creation and along with designer Rachael Canning have created a fresh, modern and magical retelling of this popular fairytale.

Like the company's very successful previous seasonal shows, *Beauty and the Beast* is a triumph of music, costume and comedy.

The action takes place on a circular stage in the centre of the amazingly opulent, antique Mirror Tent, where cabaret-style seating allows the audience to sit at small individual candle-lit tables to watch the performance.

The tent's velvet canopies, mirrored roof and ornate pillars and booths will make the perfect setting for *Beauty and the Beast*, creating an enchanting ambience for this well-loved tale and adding further to the spell-binding experience.

Audiences can also enjoy refreshments at their table before the show or in the interval.

This really is a show to enchant and delight both children and grown ups and a very different way to enjoy a theatrical performance.

Tickets (which start at only £8.50) are on sale now from the Box Office on 01865 766266.

Pitmen Painters

By Kohinoor Sahota



BILLY ELLIOT'S recent win of ten Tony Awards in America is a testament to Lee Hall's brilliance, and how a story largely about class struggle can have a universal appeal. In the *Pitmen Painters* Hall works his magic on the true story about the Ashington Group in 1934, a group of miners who hire a Durham lecturer to teach them art appreciation. They go on to produce paintings of industrial life that critics love, have exhibitions in London, and gain rapid fame.

How do you appreciate art, and who can appreciate art? These are just some of the questions asked by the play. Feelings are universal, and the groups teacher Mr. Lyon is adamant that "anyone can paint",

meaning so too can anyone, even a miner, appreciate art. The play begins with a humorous first half (when the group are told Helen has come for modern art, one of the members responds "you've come to the right place, these were all painted last week"), and it gracefully moves into a poignant second half with Oliver who is artistically gifted but faces challenges with his own class struggle.

Hall adapts William Feaver's book superbly, and Max Robert's direction is equally good. The staging is stripped down to only five main cast members, five chairs, scattered paintings, and a screen to display work to the audience that the group talk about. The understated set is spot on allowing the high emotion, quick dialogue, and witty remarks to shine. It is ultimately Hall's characterisation of the group that makes the play: they have a thirst for knowledge, working class spirit, and extreme likeability. The subjects are tackled with great sensitivity, you are never laughing at them, instead you are rooting for the miners to overcome obstacles either imposed by society or upon themselves.

The play returns to the National Theatre before a tour across the UK and Ireland. It is highly recommended, having won the Evening Standard Best Play award, too, this is a must-see. A beautiful masterpiece.

Pitmen Painters at the National Theatre, London runs until 18 January.

Kohinoor Sahota is a Leys native, born and bred in Oxford. She is now living and working as a journalist in London, and is on a one year Arts Journalist scheme with the Royal Shakespeare Company in which she is responsible for promoting theatre to new audiences. She has been published in Time Out, Guardian, Observer, Independent, and Financial Times, and writes regularly about theatre, literature, and the arts, and Leys News is delighted that Kohinoor has contributed to this month's arts and culture page.

A boy, a pheasant, a dog and a monkey

Robyn and Zoe Parfitt (see page 12) went to see the Oxford Theatre Company's production of *Peach Boy: The Adventures of Momotaro* at the Barn. This is their report for Leys News on the night's performance.



PEACH BOY, the Story of Momotaro, is a traditional Japanese folk tale somewhere between Hercules and Thumbelina. Momotaro is found in a peach by his elderly parents. When the family treasure is stolen by giants, Momotaro sets out to recover it. On the way, he meets Pheasant, Dog and Monkey who help him in his quest.

Three actors from The Oxford Theatre Company came to the Blackbird Leys Barn to put on

this play.

Gillian Cally played Ma, Pheasant, Cold Lady and the Sun Goddess. Jonathan Metcalf played Pa, Dog, Monkey and the Moon God. Elliott Quinn played Momotaro.

With a minimum of props and costumes, the three actors put on a wonderful play of this story that we really enjoyed. We liked Ma and Pa best of all the characters, but Momotaro made us laugh when he tried to drink the ocean and then had to pee it

all out again! The story was not violent, it was witty and funny, and we thought that it would be enjoyed by families as well as children.

The audience listened, laughed, and were kept entertained by the actors all the way through. We found that we were sad at the sad bits and we laughed at the funny bits. We recommend this play and this type of theatre for all audiences. We really loved it, and would go again, any day or night!

New year...new business?

RETURNING TO WORK after the holidays can be tough and almost demoralising; many people dream of answering to no one but themselves. The thought of going it alone can be daunting but there is plenty of help available.

Business Link has these top tips for people who are thinking about working for themselves.

1. Carry out some research on your chosen market.
2. Focus on who your customers will be. Offer an attractive product and ensure you are competitive.
3. Make sure you calculate your costs to ensure you break even.
4. Draft a business plan that covers that takes a long term perspective.
5. Get help and support. Starting and managing your own business will involve some tough challenges and difficult decisions.

Business Link runs a free programme of workshops including 'Foundations for Success', to introduce participants

For more information, phone 0845 6009006, or go to www.businesslink.gov.uk/southeast/startup.

to all the things they need to consider when starting a business, and lets them evaluate whether running a business is right for them. Further free workshops cover finance, business planning and marketing and are run regularly during the day, in the evening and at weekends all over Oxford.

Paul Griffiths of Business Link, who carries out face to face meetings with new businesses in Blackbird Leys every week, says: "Starting a business is exciting but there is a lot to learn. Business Link provides essential information, advice and workshops to help individuals with an idea or the desire to become self-employed. Last year, we helped over 600 people locally to start a business."

"We can help you decide if it's the right option for you, and if you take the plunge, we will provide you with all the support you need to feel confident as you move forward."



Home working is good for the family

IF YOU ARE thinking of starting a business from home, then you are not alone! Research has shown that not only is the home is the most popular location to start a business, but more than 60% of businesses are started from home; equal to more than 1,400 each week. Research by the home working website www.enterprisenation.com says that there are 2.1 million home based businesses in the UK, contributing £364 billion in turnover to the UK economy, and that the highest growth in home business is coming from Mums, young people and the over 50's.

Nearly 90 per cent of home working parents confirm that being at home is good for the children, as this offers flexibility and means that you can plan your work around sleep

times and nursery or school runs.

Being organised is the key to making home working really benefit you and your family, and you will need a certain amount of discipline.

Another important point to remember is that running your business from home means a lot of hard work! You will have to sacrifice a lot of your free time particularly in the early days, and get used to working in the evenings and at weekends. You also need to be strict with friends and family and discourage them from simply calling round for a chat and a coffee every day!

For more information and inspiration about working from home go to www.enterprisenation.com or www.businesslink.gov.uk

Business network is launched

More women than ever are deciding to run their own businesses, and the flexibility and independence that working for yourself offers is one of the reasons that working mothers, in particular, find going it alone in business really beneficial.

THE LEYS IS full of enterprising women, and in an effort to bring them all together one dynamic business woman is launching a new networking group. Katie Chester is mum to Esme and an English language lecturer as well as one of the team of Community Journalists at Leys News.

In her precious spare time, Katie also works for Tish Tash Toys, a party planning business that sells traditional, wooden and educational toys and through her work has realised that there is a gap in the market for a business support group.

Katie said: "I started working with the party plan business earlier this year and hold parties at other people's houses. I have been busy building up my contacts and attending lots of events to spread the word and while I was doing that I realised that we need a business networking group for women on The Leys."

Not content with her current business empire, Katie is also hoping to get involved with a couple of other ventures in the New Year, and is hoping to launch her new group very soon.

She added: "I am planning to hold meetings once a month for women to get together and share information, advice and resources as well as



Photo: Martyn Day

LEYS BUSINESS WOMEN: Katie Chester and her daughter Esme

support."

The meetings will be informal and are likely to be held at The Boiler Room cafe, the times of the meetings will be arranged to fit around school hours-making it as accessible as possible.

Katie added: "The meetings will be free, you just have to buy your own tea or coffee, and we already have some great guest speakers lined up. I would really like anyone who is thinking about starting up a business to come along and get some

info and advice from those who've already tried it, as well as anyone who is in business or working for themselves already. I hope the group will be inspiring and educating, and

somewhere that women can come to for advice and support about their new ventures. It will also be a lot of fun and very social and child friendly!"

For more information about Katie's new group, please email her kches2001@yahoo.com

Katie's party plan business, Tish Tash supply a range of lovely wooden, traditional and educational toys. They have everything from pocket money toys to ride on toys, dolls houses and more. Further information is available from the website www.tishtashtoy.com

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Quit Smoking? Best thing I ever did!

Kerry Ashley Morgan, local mum of six and family matters link worker spoke to Katie Chester about how she gave up smoking.



Congratulations on giving up smoking! When did you quit?
9th November 2005. It was the day my youngest child was born. Basically I gave birth and then slapped on a nicotine patch. I'd planned it all with my doctor in advance.

How many cigarettes a day were you on?
I could get up to 40 a day.

What made you decide to stop?
First a close relative of mine died unexpectedly of cancer, and then I got very ill during my pregnancy with serious chest infections and asthma.

Was it the first time you'd tried?
Yes it was.

How did you do it?
I'd planned it all with my doctor in advance. The doctor prescribed the strongest patches available and I used patches for three to four weeks, gradually reducing the strength.

Did the patches help?
Yes, they just took away the craving.

And how did you cope with the psychological side of it?
Having a new baby took my mind off smoking and kept me busy!

Were you ever tempted to have another cigarette? How did you keep going when it got tough?
I was tempted on numerous occasions, but I just asked myself - is it worth the expense? Is it worth smelling horrible? Is it worth getting asthma and bronchitis? I actually had a sister-in-law who gave up at the same time so we were able to offer each other support as well.

What do you think about it now?
Best thing I ever did!

What are the advantages of not smoking?
Being able to breathe without struggling, not smelling of

smoke, the children not smelling of smoke, the children not whining and asking me to stop, getting my sense of smell and taste back, and by about two months later I began feeling a lot healthier too.

What would you say to anyone else who's thinking about giving up?
There will always be a reason to stop you giving up, but you will know when you're ready to quit - you can't do it because someone else wants you to, only when you're ready in your own mind. Everybody's different and there are so many different ways to give up. For example my sister-in-law did it by using hypnosis and that worked for her, while the patches worked for me. Try everything that's out there. I think the smoking cessation group is an excellent idea as it offers you support from other people going through the same thing. Good luck!

Kerry is a busy local mum who has six children of her own and two step children. She goes to Ruskin College and also works as the local Family Matters Link worker, offering support to local families of offenders. Her Family Matters contact number is 01865 779615

Angela is on a healthy mission!



ANGELA HAS BEEN a health visitor at the Leys Health centre for the last two and a half years and she has recently begun a new role as Health Visitor for the Leys Children's centre. She'll be working on projects to help the community with a range of health issues which include:

- Helping people to give up smoking, especially pregnant women
- Helping to reduce teenage pregnancy
- Obesity
- Oral health
- Helping to reduce childhood accidents
- Encouraging breast feeding

Angela's first project is the smoking cessation group, to be run with Camille the Maternity Outreach Worker. This is a seven week course starting on Wednesday 24th February, which will be held at the children's centre. The aim of the group is to provide support and help for parents who would like to give up smoking. If you're

pregnant and would like to stop smoking before your baby is born, this course is for you! It will be a small group of eight to ten people who are all aiming to give up, and the quit date is set for the third week of the course, which is during national No Smoking week in March. The course will offer advice on giving up and prescriptions for patches and nicotine chewing gum will be available, but one of the main benefits will be the support of the group as everyone will be aiming to give up together. If you are interested in joining the group, contact the children's centre on 779615 and leave a message for Angela or Camille.

Future projects planned by Angela include a HENRY course in March. Angela is helping to run this with Debbie Scrivener from the Children's Centre, and it will focus on healthy eating and exercise for families with young children.

By Katie Chester

Safe surfing for children

WITH LAUNCH OF the Leys Children's Centre website just a couple of weeks away, I thought it would be useful to think about a few tips for keeping our older children safe online.

It is important that we make our children aware that...

- They should never give out personal details to online friends they do not know offline.
- Some information about them is personal: i.e. email address, mobile number, school name, sports club, and any pictures or videos of themselves, family or friends.
- They need to think carefully about the information and pictures they post on their profiles, the internet is not a private place, anyone can change or share these images of them. Advise your children not to post any pictures, videos or information on their profiles, or in chat rooms, that they would not want a parent or carer to see.
- They should never believe the content of spam or junk email and texts, or reply to them or use them.
- It's not a good idea for your child to open files that are from people they don't know. They could contain a virus, or worse - an inappropriate image or film.
- Some people lie online and therefore it's better to keep online mates online. They should never meet up with any strangers without an adult they trust.

By Katie Chester

To keep them safe we should...

- Get to know our child's online habits. They will explore the internet as much as they do the real world. Know the sites they go to, the people they meet there and what they do.
- Stay alert to any sudden changes in mood or appearance, or to any major change in habits or to increased secretiveness. These are often tell-tale signs that something is not right.
- Tell our child they can always talk to you or another trusted adult, such as a teacher, if they do end up in some sort of trouble on the internet. Make them aware that there are things on the internet which may distress them.
- Spend some time surfing the internet yourself, so as to help your child navigate around it without coming to any harm.
- Install internet filtering software showing a Child Safety Online Kitemark on your computer. Filtering products with a Kitemark have been independently tested to provide a simple and effective means of support to parents, helping to ensure that a child's online experience is a safe one. The Kitemark scheme is government approved.

A useful website for more information is: www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Green Fingers

By Stuart Mabbutt

A Question of Cauliflowers

Recession, what recession! My gardening business is busier than ever before. As such, this article is rather short as I am pushed for time and need a chance to sleep too!

I have been asked a question by a reader, that I would like to cover here, and as it's a short question, with a short answer, it will suit the time constraints I have for compiling this article.

The Question, "We don't seem to use cauliflower in large volumes like we used to, as it has fallen off the radar with regards to many home growers. Can you tell me what varieties, when, where and how to grow them?"

Sure can! Cauliflowers like compacted soil (but not too compacted) with lots of compost in. It likes a sunny sight, but needs to be sheltered if you are growing winter types. They are thirsty plants so keep them evenly watered or you will only get small heads. To store them, lift the entire plant and hang them upside down in a dark dry place, as they will last that way for about 2 weeks especially if you spray the heads lightly with water every few days.

Sow seeds from March to May regardless what month or season they mature in, and when the seedlings have at least 8 leaves, transplant them to the area they will be grown on in. Spacing is important, winter varieties need 3 feet between each plant and summer and autumn types need 2½ feet between them.

Summer varieties are small squat plants; Alpha is one I like as it does not run to seed as quickly as other types.

Autumn types can be large or squat, it depends on what you like and how much space you have. Flora Blanca is the first kind of cauliflower I ever grew, with huge white heads, ideal for showing if you were so inclined. It harvests in September, which follows on nicely from the summer varieties that are picked during June but mainly in July.

Winter types and spring types can be susceptible to frost, so you need to protect them from the worst of the elements. St Agnes is a real favourite as I often have it at around Christmas time because it crops so early, but unless you protect it, it will disappoint even at a mere hint of a frost.

That's all for now, I'm now off to put my feet up and have a well earned sleep. I remember when I used to struggle to find enough gardening work during the colder months; this year there has been no respite at all. So no winter rest for me then this year it would appear.

HAPPY GARDENING.

Get Moving...Get Dancing!

Brand new dance series for the Over 50's

FOLLOWING ON FROM the ever-popular TV series 'Strictly Come Dancing', a brand new programme of weekly Dance Sessions for the Over 50's is coming to South East Oxford from this month.

Each week will offer a chance to try out a different style of dance and will be run by qualified dance instructors. No previous experience is necessary. The classes are open to all, and do not demand any prior level of fitness.

This is the perfect opportunity to have a go! With no commitment to having to come every week, the invitation is for anyone over 50 to come along, join in, keep fit and have fun! Wear loose comfortable clothing and comfortable footwear. No need to bring a partner.

The sessions start at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre on Monday 18th January 2010 (from 10-11am). There will be a five-week block with sessions every Monday, at the same time, until Monday 15th February 2010.

A second block of five sessions follows on at Temple Cowley Pools and Fitness Centre from Monday 1st March through to Monday 29th March 2010 - all sessions running from 10-11am.

The cost for each dance session is £1.50. No pre-booking is needed, and payment can be made on the day.

The dance styles on offer will include Contemporary, Butoh, Brazilian Samba, Tap, Bollywood, Gentle Ballet.

For more information, booking and full programme details contact Claire Thompson on 01865 252820 email cthompson@oxford.gov.uk.

NEW YEAR CHECKUP?

NHS & Private Dental Practice

717749
K. Colton B.D.S.c

Leys Dental Practice
50 Blackbird Leys Road

Your Health in the New Year

AS YOU KNOW your health is very important and many people only realise this at the beginning of January every year when they make their resolutions. Hopefully this small article will just give you some little guidelines that will help you achieve your resolutions without too much stress.

Now most people try to do too much straight away which either doesn't fit in with their lifestyle or leaves them in absolute agony the next day and them wondering why they thought it was a good idea. Now the key to success is all about making it fit in with your daily lifestyle and doing little and often, whether you are trying to lose weight, get fitter or even get bigger.

Tip 1: Don't rush!
It is recommended that you exercise around 3 times a week for about 45 minutes. You don't have to go "hell for leather" and train every day. Exercise can be anything from going for a walk with the dog to going to a gym. It is just extra activity that will increase your heart rate.

Tip 2: Get Help!
Always research or speak to someone who knows what you need to do to achieve your goals. It has shown that if you have a structured plan detailing what you need to do you are more likely to stick to it and achieve your goals. This will also help you fit it into your daily schedule which means you won't have to sacrifice any of the stuff you enjoy doing.

Tip 3: Find a Friend!
Training buddies will also help you stick to it as it makes it more sociable and you will have that shoulder of support to help motivate you. Not only that, it gives you a chance to catch up on the latest sports or gossip.

Tip 4: Forget Diets!
It's not about cutting anything out of your diet, it's all about moderation. You don't need to suddenly stop eating anything that contains a gram of fat or a not eat a single biscuit just cut back a little. What you eat also depends on what you want to achieve so go back to tip 2 and seek advice.

If you follow these you will find it easier to conquer your resolutions and get to the level of health that you want. Good luck and most of all enjoy it!



Make 2010 a happy AND healthy new year!

We all start the New Year with great intentions of making some big changes in our lives, but how long do those resolutions generally last? A day...a week... maybe a month if we are lucky! However, a new year is a great time to take stock of what has happened during the year and think carefully about the kind of changes that you can make in the coming year that will really make a difference-both to you, your family, friends, work colleagues and even the environment.

Making New Year resolutions is not all about taking out an expensive and unnecessary gym membership, depriving yourself of your favourite food or vowing to never touch a drop of alcohol again. However, health eating and living should be top of your agenda anyway and January is always a good time to have a bit of a health and wellbeing overhaul.

Beauty, health and wellbeing
Start at the top and work your way down, that way you can spend some time paying attention to things that might otherwise be ignored. When it comes to our hair the winter wreaks havoc with its condition because one minute we are outside in chilling temperatures and the next we are in the dry heat of central heating. The best way to combat dry, split ends and the inevitable frizzy hair that results is to use a hot oil treatment once a week and try to keep your hair trimmed. There is no need to spend a fortune on products, warmed olive oil or vegetable oil is just as effective as a conditioner that you can buy and mobile hairdressers who visit you in your home, or students and trainee hairdressers are perfectly capable of giving you a quick trim, meaning you can avoid the cost of visiting a salon!

Skin generally takes a battering at this time of year so it's important to keep it protected with moisturiser, again the most expensive brands are not always the best so check out supermarkets own brand

products and look out for any buy one get one free options too. For lips that are dry and flaky, use a small amount of olive oil mixed with brown sugar and you have your very own virtually free exfoliator! Simply massage in to lips and dry hands to reveal smoother, softer skin.

In terms of general wellbeing, coughs, colds, flu and other infections are still doing the rounds so remember to use antibacterial hand gel, sneeze and cough into tissues and then dispose of the tissues immediately to prevent the risk of infections spreading. Stick to eating five a day of fresh fruit and vegetables and make one of your New Year resolutions a plan to get you and your family on a drive to eat really healthily. Healthy eating doesn't have to be expensive, the key is to plan your menus in advance and get clever with your weekly shop. Remember that frozen veg can be used as well as fresh, and keep a look out for special offers, buy one get one free and reduced produce as all these savings can make a big difference to the family food bill!



Go green!
If you are not already an avid recycler then make 2010 the year when you really get to grips with helping your local environment. Whether you start making trips to the bottle bank, get into a routine with your recycling bins or cut down on your carbon emissions, we can all do something to ease the strain on the environment. Things like car sharing and cutting down the number of times you use the car can really have an impact-and you will feel as if you are doing your bit! If you want some tips and ideas for what you can do to help Oxfordshire tackle climate change then go to www.oxfordshire.gov.uk where you will find a whole section about recycling and waste management in Oxfordshire.

Get involved!
Make 2010 the year that you get to know your neighbours! It may sound ridiculous but many of us live in the same place for years and never speak to those who live nearby. It could be that you simply have no time to stand and chat, or that you don't have much in common with those living next door. However, getting involved with community groups

and clubs on The Leys will give you a chance to make new friends and find some common ground with people in your neighbourhood. You could end up getting involved in local groups and campaigns, or simply make friends with people who have kids the same age as yours and end up being able to do a childcare swap once a week. For information about events and groups in Blackbird and Greater Leys check out Leys Listings and the information pages in Leys News.

One last New Year Resolution...at Leys News we love to hear from you so write us a letter! Whether you want to thank someone for helping and supporting you through a difficult time, tell us about something new, complain about an issue that is bugging you or suggest a story idea for the newspaper, we would love to hear from you and we offer a prize for the best letter that we publish in each issue of Leys News, so put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard) and get in touch! Send your letters to editor@leysnews.co.uk We wish you all a happy and healthy New Year!



New Year, New You?

At the Ozone Health club we are here to help you achieve your goals, and with memberships that are very affordable for everyone. We have lots to offer such as state of the art gymnasium, 20 metre pool, 3 aerobic studios and more....



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Relax with Qi Gong

A new year is a great time to take up a new hobby or interest, and if it helps improve your health and wellbeing that's a bonus!



SUE MORRIS, from Greater Leys runs a local Qi Gong Class. She said: "I have been training in martial arts for the past 15 years. Until a year ago I trained in combat skills, including Snake Style Kung Fu, Southern Chow Gar Praying Mantis and Tai Chi. I now train purely in Qi Gong and Bamboo. Qi gong is a powerful system of healing and energy medicine from China. It is the art of using breathing techniques; gentle movements and meditation to cleanse and strengthen the life energy (Qi)."

Qi Gong practice leads to better health and vitality and a tranquil state of mind.

Sue added: "I started teaching in October 2009 after my teacher felt it was time to promote this wonderful art in the community. I still train with him five days a week and run the classes twice

weekly under his guidance.

"Since I began Qi Gong training I have not had a day off work ill, have more energy than ever before, my body shape has toned and most importantly, I do not suffer from stress. This is especially helpful as I have a very stressful day job."

At present the class is made up of women aged between 20 and 60 years from all different walks of life, except the assistant instructor Tony who at present is the only male member.

Sue added: "The current members attend one night or both which is fine as we are a beginners class we do recap the exercises both nights. Each lesson we warm up, light stretch, learn de-stressing exercises, learn ba-duan-jin (which is a form of Qi Gong) and end with meditation. The most wonderful thing of

Qi Gong is that each exercise can be modified to be done seated as well as standing therefore no one is excluded from the system. Quotes from class members: 'Amazing, wonderful food for the body and mind' - Rita McGroaty.

'It has been wonderful, my stress levels have come right down, which has helped me in a difficult time' - Caroline Weddell.

'My health has improved. I feel more emotionally stable and Qi Gong has centred me spiritually, I can't recommend this enough.' - Lorraine McNally.

Sue added: "We were lucky enough to be invited to The Scared Heart Church on Saturday 28th November 2009 to do a demonstration for the Christmas bazaar. It was incredibly nerve-racking for us all, but we had very positive feedback from the captive audience. A big Thank you to Carolyn for providing the photographs from the day.

"At present the classes run Tuesdays and Thursdays at The Barn off Dunnocks way, 7.30-8.45pm. The class are free of charge but donations to the club are gratefully received. Thanks to Sasha East and Catalyst communities who allow us to use the space rent free.

"We hope to continue to offer this class free in the New Year."

For further information please contact Sue on 07833536121 or at bbleys.bamboogigong@yahoo.co.uk

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Supporting people through the process of quitting



What's On at The Leys Children's Centre

January - February 2010

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		Breakfast available on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at Cuddesdon Corner 9.00am-9.45am (small fee)			
Cuddesdon Corner 01865 773263 (Linked with Orchard Meadow School 01865 778609)	Cooking with Claire* Starting 11 January 9.30am-11.30am Contact Claire Johnson 01865 773263 Stay & Play for Babies, dads, mums & carers 1.00pm-3.00pm Contact Mikko Enticknap 01865 773263 Help with Reading, Writing and Spelling* Starting 11 January 1.00pm-3.00pm Contact Anne Wells 01865 779615 Legal Advice Direct 1.00pm-4.30pm Contact Valerie O'Malley 01865 779615 to make an appointment The Listening Centre 12.30pm-9.00pm Phone 01865 794794	PEEP for 1s # 9.30am-10.30am Call 01865 395145 Stay & Play with lunch (small fee) 11.00am-2.00pm (Speech and Language Advice available 12.00pm-1.00pm) Job Centre Plus 1.00pm-2.00pm See Trudi at Cuddesdon Corner The Listening Centre 5.00pm-9.00pm Parent-talk 7.30pm-9.30pm contact Rosie Hill 01865 875482 # For information on other PEEP groups in the area contact 01865 395145	Smoking Cessation* Starting 24 February 9.30am-11.00am Contact Valerie O'Malley 01865 779615 Make-up course* Starting 13 January 9.30am-11.30am Contact Anne Wells 01865 779615 ESOL group* Starting 3 February 9.30am-11.30am Contact Anne Wells 01865 779615 Midwife Clinic for post natal and baby checks, support and advice, 12.30pm-2.30pm, drop-in or phone 01865 221696 for an appointment Teenage and Pregnant (TAP1) 1.00pm-3.00pm Contact 01865 773263 for details The Listening Centre 5.00pm-9.00pm	Signing course* Starting 21 January 9.30am-11.30am Contact Anne Wells 01865 779615 Agnes Smith Advice Centre (for advice on benefits, money advice and debt) 10.00am-1.00pm. Contact Jackie Knight 01865 770206 Volunteer Training* Starting 21 January 1.00pm-3.00pm Contact Anne Wells 01865 779615 The Listening Centre 5.00pm-9.00pm	The Baby Café (supporting breastfeeding) 10.30am-12.30pm  Stay & Play with lunch (small fee) 11.00am-2.00pm
				Saturday Dad's Zone 10.00am-1.30pm Contact Conroy Harris 0777 540 7524 Maluchy - Little Ones 10.00-11.00am For information contact 07951 263 191 (English) or 07874 187 704 (Polish)	
Orchard Meadow 01865 778609			Cooking and Coffee Contact Carole Pether 01865 778609		
Pegasus 01865 777175	Salsa 9.30am-10.30am Contact Carol Caufield 01865 777175 Introduction to Aromatherapy* Starting 11 January 10.30am-11.30am Contact Carol Caufield 01865 777175	COMING SOON AT PEGASUS Getting Ready for School			Family Links* 9.15am-11.15am Contact Carol Caufield 01865 777175 Computer drop-in sessions* 9.15am-11.15am Contact Carol Caufield 01865 777175
Windale 01865 777796	Stay and Play 9.30am-11.00am contact Nicky Solomon 01865 777796		Sewing Circle* 9.00am-11.00am Contact Nicky Solomon 01865 777796	PEEP for 1s 9.30am-10.30am Call 01865 395145 Creative Group* 1.30pm-2.45pm contact Nicky Solomon 01865 777796 (small fee for materials)	Parents Coffee Morning 9.00am-11.00am
Leys Health Centre		Baby Massage for babies from 8 weeks old 1.00pm-2.00pm Contact Linda Picton 01865 788688 or Monika Celebi 07879674425		Baby Signing For babies 6-18 months Starting 14 January 10.00am-10.45am Contact Valerie O'Malley 01865 779615	

*CHILDCARE AVAILABLE

Mums and Tots Group welcomes new members

By Katie Chester



The Mums and Tots playgroup celebrating their first birthday

THE MUMS AND TOTS playgroup meets every Thursday at the Holy Family Church Hall opposite Top Shops. It's run jointly by the Leys Youth Programme and the Leys Community Church. The group recently celebrated its first birthday and organiser Katie Gamble is keen to welcome new comers.

"The group is for all mums and their children aged 0 -3. It's a fun, friendly place to come and meet other people, play with your children and have a bit of a social life. It's great to meet other people who are going through the same

things as you so you know you're not alone and what your child is doing is perfectly normal! It's also good to meet mums with slightly older children so they can give us a heads up on what may be to come, like how to apply for pre-schools. But even if you're not looking for advice, it's a great place to make friends - I personally have made friends that will last probably until we get our bus passes!

"We welcome both breastfeeding and bottle, so feel free to do what you're comfortable with. We provide snacks and drinks for children

and cups of tea for mums. We also have a microwave where you can heat up food for your little one."

Cheryl Marsh has been attending the group with her son Luke (2) since last January and says she highly recommends the group. "The group leaders are very welcoming people, which makes it a pleasure to come to.

There are lots of toys and creative activities every week for the children and a little group time where we sing, which is good for group bonding."

Clare Trenchard, mum of

two year old Bethan and baby Max says, "Mums and Tots has been such an amazing support for me. It's so nice to come into a relaxed and welcoming environment where my children are loved and accepted."

Polish readers may be interested to know that Katie's assistant, Agee, is Polish and welcomes Polish speakers to the group.

The group runs every Thursday from 10 - 11.30 am and is free to attend. For more details, contact Katie on 427075, or just turn up.

Agony Aunt

Is your toddler driving you mad? Not sure how to interpret your teenager's grunts? Each issue we ask an expert for their advice.

My toddler beats up other children!

"My 16 month old toddler has started pinching and scratching other children and taking their toys away. Whatever they are playing with is what she wants.

"She pinches me too when she's not happy about something. I'm also a bit worried about the way she treats the cats - although she obviously loves them, she's very rough with them and regularly beats them up! When I say 'no' she just laughs. As for changing her nappy or trying to get her dressed - it's an absolute nightmare trying to get her to stay still.

"Typical toddler behaviour, but how do you cope with it?"

This month's Agony Aunt is Lisa Dobraszczyk, Leys Children's Centre Speech and Language Therapist:

"As a speech and language therapist (and mum of a 21 month old who's been through the pinching phase!), I would try: Intervening before it happens. If you see that look in her eye, move her away and distract her with something else.

"If she does pinch or scratch, get down to her level and use very simple, clear words like, 'no pinching', 'we don't pinch'. Then quickly move her away and distract her with something else.

"Demonstrate and talk about the behaviour you want i.e. stroking the cats and really emphasise that one word 'stroking' and give her lots of praise if she tries to do it.

"I wouldn't go through the trauma of making her say sorry or trying to make her share - she's too young. If she takes something, give the toy back to the other child, then again move her away and try to distract her."

If you have any worries or concerns about your child's talking, Lisa Dobraszczyk is available every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month from 12-1.00pm at 'Stay and Play' at Cuddesdon Corner Children's Centre. You can just drop in - no need for an appointment - to ask her any questions.

If you have a question you'd like some advice on (or you're willing to offer some advice) please contact the Leys News Office at editor@leysnews.co.uk

Interview with Helen Baker



Congratulations on getting the job. Are you enjoying it and what do you have to do?

Yes, I love it. I work here on reception every morning and I meet and greet people, make them feel welcome, and let people know about courses and services that are available. I love it because every day is different.

What would you say to other people who see a job on the notice board?

Just give it your best shot - you never know what can happen. And don't underestimate what you can do!

Jenny Martin, head of the children's centre said "I'm delighted we have appointed Helen - she's perfect for us. We only advertised the job on the jobs boards at the four local schools and the children's centre and we got ten really strong candidates. We interviewed seven of them, so Helen's done really well! We'd also like to recommend the JOBS boards to other local employers and to local people- the boards are free, they are updated regularly and there are people on site at the schools and Cuddesdon Corner to help people who are looking for work."

the application form in person, filled it out, sent it back and then they called me for an interview.

What was the interview like?

I was interviewed by four people and they asked me quite a lot of questions about my life experiences and what I've learned, for example "What's your greatest achievement," and "Have you ever got into a difficult situation and if so, how did you deal with it?" The questions made me think hard, but the interviewers were very friendly.

HELEN RECENTLY started work as receptionist at Cuddesdon Corner. I asked her how she found the job, and how she's getting on.

Where did you see the job advertised?

It was on the jobs notice board at Pegasus School. I used to work in the crèche there. I wasn't actually looking for a new job at the time, but this one just stood out and I decided to go for it.

What happened next?

I phoned the children's centre and it was in the middle of the postal strike so I went along to collect

Leys Children's Centre helps you give up Smoking

IF YOU ARE hoping to give up smoking in the New Year then help and support will be on hand from staff at The Leys Children's Centre.

The centre is running a stop smoking course from Wednesday February 24 for seven weeks. For further information contact Camille or Angela on 01865 779615.

Some of the Benefits of quitting are:

- Walking and running becomes a lot easier, very quickly, as circulation improves.

- Coughs, wheezing and breathing problems improve after a few months as the lungs start to work better
- You'll be less stressed and tired.
- Food will taste better
- Your skin will look younger.
- The risk of developing lung cancer, other cancers, heart disease, stroke and chronic lung disease is reduced - the sooner you stop, the sooner your risk starts going down. Stopping smoking at any age increases your life expectancy, provided

that you stop before the onset of serious disease.

- Your children will enjoy better health as they are not breathing in second hand smoke.
- If you are pregnant your unborn child will be born healthier and there will be a lower risk of complications during pregnancy and labour.

Helps is always available from the Free NHS smoking helpline on 0800 1690169.

Lines are open every day from 7am to 11pm

Round up from Cuddeson Corner

Cookery

The recent cookery course was such a success that a new one is planned for later this month. It will be held on a Thursday evening from 4.30-7.00pm and it is hoped that this timing will enable some Dads to attend. A crèche will be provided and participants will prepare a delicious meal and then be joined by their family to eat it.

People who attended the last course were delighted to learn how to prepare tasty family meals from scratch with a professional cook. Everyone enjoyed the course immensely and left with the confidence and skills to get cooking at home. If you are interested in this course please contact Conroy on 01865 773263 or 07775407524.

Baby signing

This free six week course starts on Thursday 14th January and will be held at the Leys Health Centre from 10.00-10.45am. It's suitable for babies from six

to 18 months, but brothers and sisters are welcome to come along too. Baby signing helps children's language development through song and communication and is great fun for babies and adults. To book a place please contact Valerie O'Malley on 01865 779615.

Smoking Cessation

This six week course starts on Wednesday 24th February and is for parents who would like to give up smoking. The quit date is set for the third week of the course, during national No Smoking week. Come along and get support from others who also want to give up. For more information or to book a place contact Angela or Camille on 01865 779615.

Website launch

The Leys Children's Centre now has its own website. Check it out at www.theleyschildrenscentre.org You can find out what's on at

the Children's Centre as well as a wealth of other information. The website will be officially launched on Friday January 22nd from 11am-12noon at the ABLE centre behind the library in Blackbird Leys. Families are very welcome. There are computers at the ABLE centre and children will be able to click straight through to safe games while parents can click on courses, job spot, what's on for dads, what's new and more! Anyone attending will also get a free lunch at Cuddesdon Corner afterwards.

Back Massage

Coming soon: low cost back massage sessions at the Children's Centre. For more details contact Valerie O'Malley on 01865 779615



Many thanks to DW Contractors for sponsoring this page.



Introducing the Leys News Children's Page

WE know that there are lots and lots of children who live on The Leys, and we felt that it was about time you all had your own page in Leys News, so here it is! We hope you like it and we would really like to hear from as many of you as possible for future issues of the paper.

If you have a good story to tell, a picture you have drawn, a photo you have taken, a poem you have written, some hilarious jokes or news about what is happening in your neighbourhood or at your school or youth group then please get in touch (ask an adult's permission first though please!)

We will be running competitions with some great prizes to be won in the coming months, and if you want to get in touch and become one of our team of Junior Newshounds you can either go to the website at www.leysnews.co.uk and fill in one of our contact forms, or email us at editor@leysnews.co.uk, give us a ring on 01865 711756 or write to us at 26, Kingfisher Green, Greater Leys, Oxford OX4 7BX.

Really looking forward to hearing from you all soon!
Best wishes

Sarah



WINDALE SCHOOL'S WACKY DAY: The children and teachers at Windale School raised over £250 for Children in Need by making donations to dress up in wacky clothes. Above are some of the children and teachers that took part. Photograph by Donna Joy.

Home Schooling works for us!

Our first Children's Page has been brought to you by Zoe and Robyn Parfitt from Blackbird Leys. Robyn and Zoe are taught at home by their parents and we thought it would be interesting for them to tell you about what it's like to have their lessons at home rather than at school.

ZOE INTERVIEWED her brother Robyn about being home schooled:

How long have you been home educated?

I have been Home Educated for two years, now.

Why did your parents decide to home educate?

I wasn't working as hard as I could, and I had some bullying problems as well because my parents use wheelchairs. My parents were already home educating my brother so it was a lot easier to join him rather than trying to do homework with me on top of his work.

Do you enjoy being home educated?

Yes of course. I enjoy the one-to-one teaching and work doesn't happen in a classroom, so it feels more fun and relaxed. There are no uniforms and we only get up at 7am if we're going on a day trip. The biggest walk to go to school is walking downstairs. This morning I did some English in my room before even going downstairs for breakfast, so I enjoy the freedom. We tend to get a lot more done than kids at school in the topics we cover, because we work a lot faster. I finished the Key Stage three Maths curriculum in less than a year two years ago and then we started on the GCSE curriculum and finished that as well. I'm revising and learning at a higher level so I can sit my GCSE Maths exam. I'm proud of my academic achievements, now.

Do you have lessons together?

Not all the time, we tend to study



different things at different levels. We do science, maths and history together. We don't really have 'lessons'. Learning is more relaxed, with conversations around a topic; more like my mum's university tutorials than a classroom. We go on a lot of day trips to get hands-on experience of history and science, geology, biology and culture. Lessons then turn into museum-based conversations about the exhibits. We remember a lot more about history because of what we learn in museums.

Do you still see your friends?

I've made a lot more friends out of school than I had before, so yes I do see my friends. I still see my best friend from school a lot because he lives around the corner, but I've just come back from spending a few days with a friend in Wales, so my social life is very different now.

Describe a typical day?

I get up and do brain training to

wake up my brain then do some maths. In English, I'm working on writing a book, so I'll do some research on that and work on my use of language. Then I'll do some science. I have lunch at some point when I'm finished with a project. Today over lunch we were discussing alliteration, similes and personification. After that I might do some art. My craft project at the moment is to build my own spear, and I'm learning how to parry and attack with it which is quite active. I enjoy juggling and I enjoy nature-walks.

At the end of the day, I might watch an educational DVD, like planet earth. Every day is slightly different. A typical day could also be to pile in the car and drive to London to go to the British museum for an exhibition. Some evenings, we'll go to a nature-reserve in the dark and identify animal sounds. Corin got to hold a frog, and I identified a Little Owl calling. Learning happens all day until bedtime.

THIS IS ROBYN'S interview with his sister Zoe.

How long have you been home educated?

I have been Home Educated for two years.

Why did your parents decide to home educate?

I was getting distracted in class and I wasn't working as hard as I could. My parents were already home educating my brother so it was a lot easier for me to join him.

Do you still see your friends?

I like seeing my old school friends, but I've made a lot more friends in the last two years than I used to have. I'm friends with boys as well as girls now, which doesn't really happen at school, and my friends are of all different ages now too. I went to see Mamma Mia in London with my best friend and her Mum, which was brilliant!

Do you enjoy being home educated?

Yes I do. I enjoy going to museums and being taught by my parents, as well as not having to rush to school in the mornings anymore. We are encouraged to do our own research on subjects that we're interested in, rather than being forced to follow lessons in a set order like at school.

I enjoyed the British Museum's Shah 'Abbas exhibition where mum and I admired all the rugs, books and paintings and mum talked about the textiles from his reign that she helped to conserve. In the London

founding museum we talked about how babies used to be abandoned when parents were too poor to look after them and how Thomas Coram opened the first children's home in the 18th century.

I enjoyed the Arhus museum and National Museum of Copenhagen more than my brother, because they had lots of artefacts from the Stone Age and I was able to talk to my parents about the book I was reading and how the museum related to the book.

Describe a typical day?

We don't really have a time table, and every day can be different if we choose. I start with brain training and French coach and then I set myself some maths sums to do, before working through my Maths book with my Dad. After that I will do some handwriting with my fountain pen, and discuss English with my parents before working from my Literacy book.

After lunch I do some art, and then we might watch an educational DVD like Bang-goes-the-Theory or Victorian farm. My parents know Ruth Goodman who was on Victorian farm. I enjoy skipping, going to the park for a run, swimming and going for walks. When we go for day trips, I enjoy museums best of all.

I asked to go to the Roman museum at St Albans for my birthday! Learning happens all the time in our family, and even on weekends and school holidays. We don't have school holidays, but it doesn't feel like we're working all the time because it's always fun.

Thanks to Oxford Brookes University for sponsoring this page. If you are interested in studying at Oxford Brookes please contact Marie Jones on 01865 484866 or marie.jones@brookes.ac.uk

Degree winner enjoys student life



Seyram Afenyo pictured with BBC Oxford presenter Malcom Boyden

By Briony Roberts

HAVING WON A competition entitling her to free tuition for three years, mother-of-two Seyram Afenyo began her Social Work degree studies at Ruskin College, Oxford on 28th September 2009.

The prize worth over £9,000 was a dream come true for 32 year old, Mrs Afenyo from Southmoor near Abingdon, who explained: "I had a strong desire to return to further education for many years but lack of finance as well as fear and anxiety about not being able to cope, got in the way. It's been over 15 years since I was last in a classroom but now I have a second chance and all of a sudden my life has changed."

Seyram Afenyo was forced to put her education

on hold when she came to England from Ghana six years ago, in order to work and support her family. But now thanks to the competition, is studying for a BA (hons) in Social Work and will have all her tuition fees paid. Her placement is being funded over the next three years by Ruskin College who specialise in 'return to learning' opportunities for adults with few or no qualifications.

In return, Seyram has agreed to being followed by the media regarding her journey to and through Ruskin, as well as recording her personal learning experience by posting blogs on several social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, My Space and U-Tube. "I'm so happy and really enjoying being a full time student, meeting other like-minded people and making new friends is a real

bonus. We have very small tutorial groups, just two or three students per group and therefore we get a lot of individual attention from our lecturers" commented Seyram. "I am recommending Ruskin as a great place to study to all my friends!"

When asked about what she hopes the future holds, as a result of her degree placement she said: "I look forward to the day when I can lose my housewife 'tag' forever and become a social worker with a real career ahead of me, as well as being a positive role model for our sons and to other women. I want to contribute by making a difference to someone's life and the community."

"Through Ruskin College and by winning this competition, I have been given the audacity to hope for a better future. A future that I am looking forward to with much excitement."

Since winning the free degree competition, Seyram has experienced what it is like to be in the media spotlight. She has appeared on BBC South Today with Geraldine Peers, BBC Radio Oxford with Malcolm Boyden and again with Jo Thoeness, Jack FM with Rosie Tratt, and had an article written about her success in the Oxford Mail.

Ruskin College is known as a 'second chance' adult education college that specialises in providing 'return to learning' opportunities for adults with few or no qualifications. Ruskin welcomes students who not only want to develop themselves but also 'want to put something back into society'.

Most people who study at Ruskin are entitled to some form of financial support - even without winning a prize - which can cover the cost of the whole first year of studies. More information is available from the college's Academic Registrar, Hannah Jones via hjones@ruskin.ac.uk

Ruskin offers courses in English, History, Writing for Performance, Combined Studies, Law, Youth and Community Work, Social Sciences, Social Work, International Labour and Trade Union Studies.

For full details about the range of courses available to study at Ruskin College please visit: www.ruskin.ac.uk or call 01865 554331 and ask for a prospectus.

Read about Seyram's first term at college at: www.seyram-myruskinjourney.blogspot.com/

Want to see the world? One great way to live abroad

Have you always wanted to see more than your own country? Wanted to experience different cultures, see new ways of living, improve a foreign language or just have an exciting adventure? Then read on...

By Johanna Kellermann

There are lots of opportunities to stay in a foreign country, for example to do a high school year in your school days, to do a traineeship at a firm, staying there for work and travel or just study in a foreign land. But how could we afford this stay? Good question. A few of these ways are really expensive and so I just advise you: forget them. I know a better way to stay abroad and this way is really cheap: become an Au Pair.

Everybody has heard of this word, but a lot of people don't really know how to become an Au Pair or what we do the whole day long.

You live with a host family in their house in your own room (if you're very lucky you'll have more than one room and your own bathroom.

But that's not the norm! I just have one room and a shared bathroom, but it's not too bad). Your work as an Au Pair varies. It depends on the number of children you have to care for, their ages, your host parents' jobs and the demands of your host parents. But it's usually about 25-35

hours per week. You'll have to care for the children and to do light(!) housework like unloading and loading the dishwasher, ironing the children's clothes (not the host parents' clothes!) and so on. You don't have to pay rent or for food, you'll live there as a new family member. Finally the best thing is - you'll receive pocket money. Every country has its own regulation about this, for people who are coming to the UK for example it's about £60 per week - but this also depends on the hours which you work, on your tasks and of course on your host parents' budget.

This isn't just a business relationship with this host family, it's more than this. In the best case you'll become a real family member. Needless to say that this won't be always the case, but it can be. It's a cultural exchange.

You should be experienced with childcare and you really must love children! It's very annoying when you have to listen to the kids when they say naughty things like "You're lying!", "I hate you!", "You're wrong, mummy and/or daddy do it like this...". Let me just say: It's not always easy for us Au Pairs. The children are test-

ing out the boundaries of the "new person who is in charge" and that's just normal. But it's still annoying and exhausting for us when we have to handle a crying and yelling child.

But there will be better times! When the children accept you as "the person in charge", you'll have lots of fun with them (...and believe me this time will come - sooner or later!). Children have so much love to give and they give it so easily to a - in principle - totally foreign person. Just take it, give them a few boundaries (...children do want boundaries!), care for them, play with them and they will have a very happy time with you - it doesn't matter if you want to stay 3, 6, 9 or 12 months.

Just a few more experiences from me living in a foreign country - simply a little insight, how it could be for you living abroad:

It's not always easy. The new language saps your energy, living in a foreign family with different habits is just a bit strange in the beginning, eating different food, doing different and new activities is exciting but at the same time kind of exhausting. In short: everything - and I really mean

everything! - is new and different and just not the same as it would be at home. Sometimes you'll be homesick and miss your family, your friends, your home - and it's no comfort to say "You'll find new friends". Easy advice, isn't it? But let's see, how should you get to know new people? In my case British people of my age who could be possible new friends? Drunk people in the clubs are not the best material for this job! So it is no surprise that it is easier to get to know people from your own country abroad - isn't it ridiculous? But it's true, I do know 15-20 other Au Pairs and most of them are from my own country (Yes, other 'Au Pairs' - you'll simply find your own kind). But I'm not complaining - it's fun to spend time with people, who are doing the same as you - spending a few months abroad. It's only a hint from me that you shouldn't be frustrated when you don't get to know lots of people of the country where you're in.

I almost forgot an important part. How to find a host family? You can look for a family with an agency. I can't recommend any because every country has its own

agencies and they all work differently, but you can look for information on the internet.

The second possibility to look for a host family are internet platforms. The most common homepage would be <http://www.au-pair-world.co.uk/>. You'll create a profile about yourself, your experiences with children, your hobbies, your ideas of living abroad and so on with a few pictures of yourself. Potential host families can do the same, they'll also include the tasks which have to be done. After creating a profile about yourself you have the possibility to read the host family's profiles and you can send them a message. If they like your profile, they'll answer you and you can ask them questions and tell them more about yourself - so will they.

Did I arouse your interest? Just one more hint then: Look for more information on the internet or contact the agencies, only so you'll see if the Au Pair-job would be the right work for you.

Win with Oxford Brookes University! Are you 16-19? Want to win £500? Want a scholarship to Oxford Brookes University? Join in the Science Oxford Apprentice Competition!

Win £500 with Science Oxford and Oxford Brookes University, as they combine to showcase the commercial potential of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics studies to young people.

Science Oxford and Oxford Brookes University are looking for applicants to compete in the Science Oxford Apprentice competition.

This competition, based on the hit TV show the Apprentice, sees 40 eager contestants completing a series of challenges fighting to win the £500 cash prize and a work placement in an Oxfordshire high tech company.

The competition is open to 16-19 year olds and aims to enthuse young people in science enterprise, and develop individual's skills and confidence.

The competition begins with a challenge day, where all contestants have the opportunity to meet local science and technology companies and entrepreneurs, who will share their knowledge on enterprise skills, writing a business plan and presenting a pitch.

In the afternoon contestants will complete a group challenge from which the 40 contestants will be reduced to 12 for the next level of the competition. At this stage all competitors will be able to apply for a Bronze CREST award from the British Science Association.

The 12 semi-finalists will have five weeks to research a green power source, carry out some market research, and design a system to power a building.

On the 20th of March they will present their findings on posters to visitors of the Oxford Brookes University Science Bizarre. These semi-finalists will qualify to apply for the Oxford Brookes University Scholarship Scheme, which would provide £1000 a year towards further education at Brookes University. Only six contestants will be asked to continue the competition.

The final leg of the competition requires all the skills gained throughout the challenges, as contestants present pitches to the guests of the launch of the Life Lab website - a careers resource for secondary pupils.

The winner of the competition will receive £500 and a placement with an Oxfordshire high tech company, while second and third place will receive £100.

To register your interest in this competition please contact: Natasha.Verniquet@Scienceoxford.com Tel: 01865 810014 For information on the BUSS (Brookes University Scholarship Scheme) please contact: marie.jones@brookes.ac.uk Tel: 01865 484866/ 07920 584069



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... Vacancy ...

Leys News are looking to appoint a Business and Community Development Manager from March 2010

This is a fantastic opportunity in a
growing voluntary sector business for
the postholder to attract further fund-
ing, sponsorship and advertising
revenue as well as coordinating a
team of volunteers to run the busy
Leys News Office.

Interviews Week beginning 8th February 2010

Salary: £17,110 to £22,000 pro rata per annum over 20 hours per week

Deadlines for applications: 5pm Wednesday 20th January 2010

For more details see our website www.leysnews.co.uk
or phone Anna on 01865 711756

Tell your stories!

The School of Geography at the University of Oxford is collecting oral histories from women who came to the UK as adults to work between 1950 and today.

Researchers are conducting interviews with a wide range of women, working in different kinds of jobs, across the UK. The interviews last approximately one hour, and discuss participants' personal backgrounds, and experiences of migration to the UK and working in the UK. All information collected is strictly confidential and anonymous. Interview participants will be paid £20 for their time.

The interviews are for a research project about migrant women in the British labour market since 1950. The project is directed by Professor Linda McDowell at the School of Geography, Oxford University.

The interviews will be conducted by Jane Dyson. She will be very happy to discuss this with you and to provide more detailed information about herself and the project. Contact her by phone on 07986 311060 or by email at workingmemoriesproject@gmail.com

For more details about the project:
www.genet.ac.uk/projects/project6.htm

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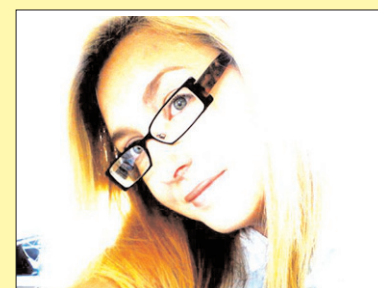


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Trisha's Beats



So 2009 has now come to an end and 2010 is upon us. Happy New Year!

December as always brought us the battle of the singles...With Robbie Williams back with a new album and the Xfactor winner as usual taking over every inch of radio air...So I'm not going to bore you. This is my twelve days of Christmas, music and artists we might want to forget about in 2010, and some exciting things we are going to bring with us and never forget!

12. All those adverts for the lovely albums in December: The Soldiers, The Priests, The Choir Boys, The Men, The Green Grocer and The Ice Cream Man...coming to stores near you soon!

11. Peter Andre at the O2 Academy Oxford in March all sold out! As always .. See tickets.com a few pennies added on top!

10. Westlife covering Daughtry's song *What about now*. Buy Daughtry...its almost like buying organic!

9. Susan Boyle...As famous as Oprah?

8. JLS Getting really famous. And playing The Regal.

7. Status Quo playing the New Theatre Oxford...and not being able to get tickets.

6. Alexander O'Neil at the Regal. So underrated! He's a legend!

5. Myspace music. Another great idea!

4. Michael Jackson...*This is it* on the big screen! It has to come out on dvd!

3. Oasis splitting up. Its not the first time!

2. The credit crunch. It was rubbish .. But wow how cheap is our music.

1. The tragedies in the music industry: the loss of the legend Michael Jackson, Les Paul, guitarist, innovator and inventor, and Stephen Gately, singer and Boyzone member.

Five great things for 2010:

5. Green Day have announced that they will play two outdoor shows at Wembley Stadium next June!

4. Bringing back big hair, Europe, Sweden's biggest rock band, play at the o2 in February. Tickets on sale now.

3. Look out for Abba mania at the New Theatre on 5 February.

2. You can find out about everything going on in and round Oxfordshire by joining the face book group Oxfordshire music scene.

1. You can win an mp3 player in this issue of Leys News! See page 2.

Thanks for listening.

**Until next time
Trisha**

What's on

A quick guide to what's available in the Leys. If you have a service or event you'd like to include in What's On, please ring 01865 711756.

ADVICE

Agnes Smith Advice Centre

Gives free independent and impartial advice. Drop-in sessions are in the centre on Mondays 2.00pm–4.00pm and Fridays 10.00am–12.00pm. Also in the Farmhouse on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10.00am–12.00pm.
☎ 01865 770206

CHILDREN

Baby Cafe: Cuddesdon Corner Family Centre, Fridays, 10.30am to 12.30pm.
Carole Roberts, 01865 788688
www.thebabycafe.org

The Barn Youth Project

Session for ages 7–12 is on Mondays 5.30–7.30pm. Wednesdays is for young people aged 13–20, & runs from 7pm–9pm.

Blackbird Leys Youth Centre Blackbird Leys Road. Variety of activities & advice for young people. ☎ 01865 772886.

Brownies: Thursdays, Holy Family Church Hall. Gill Manning, ☎ 01865 770959

Dovecote

Afterschool Club: Mondays – Thursdays
Saturday Club: 10am–1pm. For 5–12 year olds. £2.50 per child per session.
☎ 01865 712299

The Greater Leys Youth Football Club

☎ Nick, 07862236540

Leys Kiddie Club: In the Dovecote Family Drop-in Room, Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays & Fridays, 9.30am–2.30pm. £1. Price includes a hot drink and a soft drink for children.

Maluchy: group for Polish speaking families with children age 0–5, every Saturday at Cuddesdon Corner family centre. 9.30–10.30am

Oxfordshire (The Rifles) Battalion Army Cadet Force Sandy Lane West. Boys and Girls ages 13 to 18. Thursdays 7.30–9.30pm.
☎ 01869 259681

Starlight Black Child Mixed Heritage Group provides a safe forum to explore issues of race and racism with other parents, while the children have fun playing and getting to know each other.
☎ 01865 776691

35th Oxford Scout Group
☎ Duncan Bowler, 0776 6293353

Rainbows: Girls aged 5 to 7. Fridays during term time, 5.30–6.30pm, at the Holy Family Church Hall on Cuddesdon Way.
☎ Laura Turner, 07787528120.

EDUCATION

Blitz IT Courses

IT for beginners, internet, email, file management, PC maintenance and more.
☎ 01865 714492 to find out what is currently on offer.

Oxford Women's Training Scheme

☎ Helen McLuckie 550227
hmluckie@ocuc.ac.uk

OLDER PEOPLE

The Clockhouse

Activities, Friendship, Learning and Fun for over 50s on the Leys. The Clockhouse is on Long Ground, Greater Leys – look for the clock on the roof.
☎ Sally Meachim 01865 395908 for more details

Gardening Club for the over 55s

First Thursday of each month 2–4pm. £2. Clockhouse Community Centre.
☎ 01865 395908

7 January: Talk by John Watmough of Oxotica, a National group of Cactus/Succulent collectors. Bring plants & questions!

4 February: Talk by Ray Borrett on Organic Gardens, giving advice and ideas for the 21st Century lifestyle.

25 February: Rose pruning in a Littlemore garden, by a local expert. We'll meet outside the Golden Ball Pub at 2pm

4 March: Talk and slide show of her personal tour of Australian Botanic Gardens By Joanna Mathews.

WELLBEING

Oxford Survivors Free Drop-in

A self-help group of people who use or have used mental health services. Fri and Sat, 10.30am–3.30pm Blackbird Leys community centre.
☎ 01865 455868
oxford.survivors@supanet.com

The Listening Centre.

A counselling service for Blackbird Leys and Oxford. Cuddesdon Corner Family Centre. Mondays: 12.30pm–8.30pm. Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays: 5.30pm–8.30pm.
☎ 01865 794794

Slimming World.

Thursdays, 7.00pm, Leisure Centre, Pegasus Road.
☎ Gill, 01865 730009

LEISURE

Irish dancing

Sacred Heart Hall. Weds & Thurs, 5pm.

Boxing training. Youth Centre at the Leys Linx Centre on Blackbird Leys Rd. Tuesday and Thursday evenings, 7.30–9.00pm.
☎ 01865 715815.

Blackbird Leys Swimming Pool

Blackbird Leys Road. General swimming times are Mon & Fri 5.45–6.45pm, and Sat & Sun 11.15am–1.00pm. Thursdays, 12–1pm, parent and toddlers. Saturdays and Sundays, 2.30–3.30pm, families only. ☎ 01865 467042.

Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre

- Bouncy fun for under 5s, Mon 10.30–12pm
- Body Conditioning, Mon 10–11am
- Tae Kwon Do, Tue 6–7pm
- Pilates Beginners, Tue 7–7.45pm
- Aerotone, Wed 6–7pm
- Tae kwon Do, Thu 5–6pm
- Circuit Training, Thu 7.05–7.55pm
- Boxercise, Fri 10–11am
- Step & Tone, Fri 6–7pm

All activites cost from £1.20

BBLeys Bamboo Qi Gong Club at The Barn (Off Dunnocks Way), Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7.30 – 8.45pm FREE! Learn the relaxing art of Qi Gong by qualified registered instructor. Improve your general health and fitness through gentle exercise. Over 16's all welcome, just turn up. info: 07833 536121 or bbleys.bambooqigong@yahoo.co.uk

... Church News ...

Sacred Heart Catholic Church

Balfour Road, Blackbird Leys (car park in Poulton Place)

Regular Services:

Sundays: Masses, 9.30am, with music and children's liturgy. 12noon in Portuguese, and 6.00pm

For all enquiries please phone the church office 01865 779658, or try Fr David's mobile 0776 5931126 Email to dm.hartley@tesco.net

Leys Community Church

☎ Richard and Kate Colbrook, 01865 714153.

Meets at 3.30pm on Sunday afternoons at the Church of the Holy Family. Meetings include special activities for children and young people.

The Church of the Holy Family

☎ Rev David Parry, 01865 778728. www.holyfamilybbl.co.uk

Eucharist: Every Sunday, 10am, with children's church;

Timeout: Reflective evening worship. Sundays, 6.30pm

Church Office Hour: Mondays, for hall bookings, wedding arrangements and enquiries), 6.30–7.30pm.

Fellowship for discussion: Most Wednesdays at 7.30pm. Prayer, Bible study.

6 January: Epiphany Service, 6.30pm.

17 January: Service celebrating the memory and legacy of Martin Luther King, 6.30pm.

7 February: The Ministry of Healing, 10.00am.

17 February: Ash Wednesday Service, 7.30pm.

Your local representatives

Parish Council

Chairman: Gerry Webb,
Vice Chair: Chris Hatton,

Non-position holders:

Anne Booker, Chris Hatton, Rae Humberstone (see City Council section below), Danny Johnston, Cyril Martin, Rosemary Morlin, Pat Stannard.

For further details telephone 01865 716943 during office hours of 9am–5pm, Monday to Friday. Answering service outside office hours. The mailing address for the Parish Council is 10 Swan Street, Oxford OX29 4HU.

Oxford City Council

Blackbird Leys Ward:



Val Smith – Labour
4 Flaxfield Road, OX4 6QD
☎ 07767 446051
valsmith@gmail.com
or cllrvsmith@oxford.gov.uk (her city councillor entry)



Rae Humberstone – Labour
75 Little Bury, Blackbird Leys
☎ 01865 779678
cllrhumberstone@oxford.gov.uk

Val Smith and Rae Humberstone will be doing street surgeries every other week. They can also visit people in their homes – ring or email to make arrangements.

Northfield Brook Ward:



Stuart Craft – Independent Working Class Association
Furlong Close, Oxford OX4 4QJ
☎ 07733 274324
Surgery: Every Tuesday from 6.30 to 7.30pm at the Clockhouse.



Jane Elizabeth Lacey – Independent Working Class Association
71 Knights Road, Blackbird Leys
☎ 07760 322336
Surgery: Tuesday from 6.30pm to 7.30pm at the Clockhouse.

Oxfordshire County Council

Leys & Lye Division:



Val Smith – Labour
4 Flaxfield Road, OX4 6QD
☎ 07767 446051
val.smith@oxfordshire.gov.uk



Richard Stevens – Labour
Flat 6 Eaton Court, Water Eaton Road, Oxford OX2 7QT
☎ 07725 353031
richard.stevens@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Member of Parliament

Member of Parliament for Oxford East



Andrew Smith – Labour
Unit 1, Newtec Place, Magdalen Road, Oxford OX4 1RE

☎ 01865 595790
andrewsmith.mp@virgin.net

Surgery: Every 3rd Friday at the Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre from 3.00pm



What do Area Committees do?

The six Area Committees are responsible for the following:

abandoned vehicles • street cleaning
dog wardens • ditches and streams
decisions on planning applications
public toilets • car parks • allotments
parks and countryside management
street naming • community centres

South East Area Committee Meetings:

Monday 4th January

Rose Hill Community Centre, The Oval
6.30pm

Monday 1st February

Blackbird Leys Community Centre
6.30pm

Monday 1st March

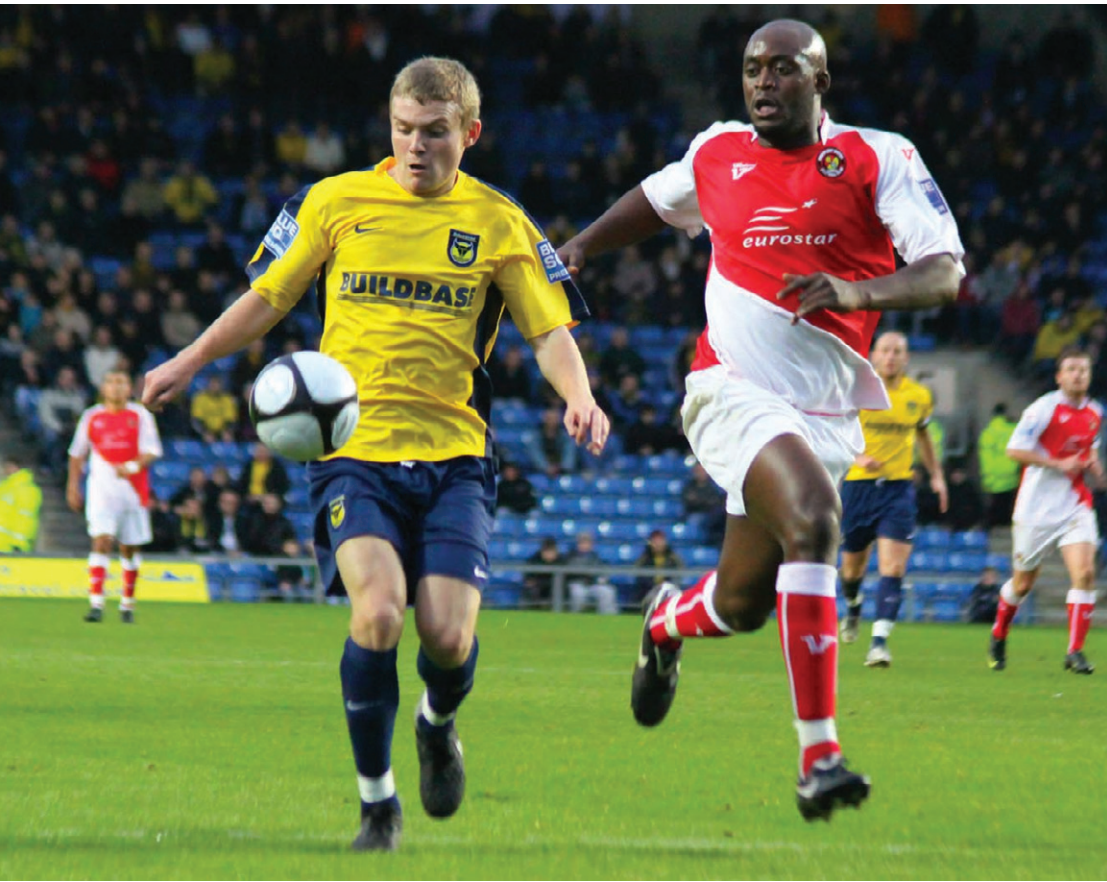
Rose Hill Community Centre, The Oval
6.30pm

For further information ring 01865 252249

Leys News aims to bring you the best in local sporting action. If you would like to sponsor this page please email editor@leysnews.co.uk or ring 01865 711756

Leys Sports

There are no easy games in football any more...



Alfie Potter is shadowed by Darius Charles

By Jacek Majewski

AS FOOTBALL PUNDITS say, there are no easy games in football any more. The Yellows were to meet Ebbsfleet United at the Kassam Stadium on a December weekend afternoon

where, in theory, the visitors should not have posed any real threat if you looked at the table before the game.

The only problem with this was that Ebbsfleet seem to be much better than their position in the table suggests - they were

definitely the most adventurous team seen at Grenoble Road for quite a while. Also the fact that they'd got results against the likes of Mansfield Town and Stevenage - two of Oxford's main promotion contenders - implied they are no pushovers.

Seeing James Constable back in the team raised hopes among U's supporters but it was his partner at front - Alfie Potter who netted the first goal after only 4 minutes following a flick from Adam Chapman.

The second goal came after 9 minutes - Simon Clist combining with Constable on the left and Beano's curling a shot past a desperate dive by Lance Cronin made it 2-0.

At this stage many of the home side supporters probably thought that the game was over as the guests did not seem to pose any danger up front. After this explosive start the match settled down with both teams fighting for possession in the middle of the pitch. It was good to see the new boy - Onome Sodje, playing against his old club- involved in a lot of U's moves on the left at this stage of the game. Also Ryan Clarke, again, proved he is a worthy replacement for Billy Turley by saving Magno Vieira's header after 20 minutes. The rest of the first half saw United counter attacking and wasting their chances up front but staying strong at the back.

Ebbsfleet finally scored after 57 minutes. Ishmael Welsh crossed from the left and Vieira headed home to make it 2-1. Then came the critical moment of the game - another cross from the left from Michael West

was somehow stepped over by Vieira in the penalty box and the ball got out for a goal kick for United. An old football rule says that if you don't take your chance it can come back haunting you. The visitors found this is still true 2 minutes later after an exquisite chip from Potter restored a 2 goal margin between the teams.

6 minutes later it was 4-1 to Oxford. Substitute Damian Batt passed the ball to Potter inside the penalty box, his shot was well saved by Cronin but Constable scored his second of the night with a rebound.

The visitors stayed positive despite the score line and committed players up front especially after bringing on Scott Ginty who scored the final goal of the game curling a nice shot past Ryan Clarke in the 88th minute.

Oxford United:

Clarke, Chapman (Batt(Midson)), Perry, Creighton, Sandwith, Clist, Bulman, Murray, Potter, Constable (F.Green), Sodje

Ebbsfleet United:

Cronin, Heeroo, Smith, Crooks, Charles, West, Holmes, Stavrinou, Welsh (Ginty), Vieira (Wills), Shakes

Referee - A.R. Hendley
Attendance - 5188 (67 visitors)

Back on winning terms

OXFORD UNITED were back on winning terms after a 1-0 win over Cumbrians from Barrow on a cold November afternoon. The only goal scored by James Constable after 27 minutes from the penalty spot meant Us are still firmly at the top of the table of the Blue Square Premier League.

Oxford United:

Clarke, Batt, Perry, Foster, Sandwith, Clist, Bulman, Murray (Chapman), Cook (Deering), Constable, Midson (Potter)

Barrow:

Tomlinson, Spender, Jelleyman, Jones, Pearson, Kamara (Rutherford), Hulbert, Bond, Walker, Bowery, Nelthorpe (Logan)

Referee: K. Johnson
Attendance: 5629

Please note that the editorial deadline for Leys News was 5 December

Motorsport diary

By Kevin Dyer



WELL HERE WE are looking forward to a new racing season and reflecting on 2009; last year turned into quite a turbulent season for motor sport and F1 in particular. We started with confusion over the technical regulations, which led to the double diffuser debacle.

Some major sponsors pulled out of the sport for one reason or another although most cited the economic climate and/or the banking crisis as the main reason for pulling the financial plug on teams. Three top manufacturers also left the sport casting doubts as to whether or not Renault would stay in for 2010.

Of our two local F1 teams Renault had a particularly bumpy ride with the cheating scandal and the fact that they just didn't seem to be able to get on the pace. With true team spirit however, they persevered and appear to be fully geared up for an onslaught on the 2010 championship but in F1 anything can happen. Williams seemed to fare better in the performance stakes, shining brightly in every practice run but seemingly plagued by bad luck in many of the qualifying sessions and races. Undeterred however they showed great improvement as the series rolled on. Both teams have announced completely new driver line-ups for 2010 and Williams have signed an engine deal with Cosworth.

On the Moto GP front our local Oxford boy Bradley Smith rode some incredible races but was pipped at the post for the championship by his teammate Julián Simón. Bradley has signed for another season with the BANCAJA Aspar team and will hopefully bring back the champions crown.

But F1 and Moto GP aside lets not forget the wide variety of auto racing that Oxfordshire has to offer. Check out page 3 for a feature on Amy Chandler, a rising star in the world of Mini Cooper racing. Throughout the coming year we will aim to feature people and teams from various series from sidecar racers to motocross and mini moto to banger racing. Look out for an up-coming feature on whatever happened to The Oxford Cheetahs speedway team. And please if you are out there and involved in motor sport in the county then do get in touch, whether you are a racer/rider, manufacturer or supplier we want your story. You can contact us at editor@leysnews.co.uk

Hoping for better results next season



Bradley pipped at post

BRADLEY SMITH gave us another fine example of the skill and true grit that has seen him secure second place in the Moto GP world championship with his sixth successive podium.

The series was decided in Malaysia but that did nothing to deter the Oxford boy in the season's last race at Valencia. Bradley took the race to his teammate and newly crowned champion Julián Simón in a nail biting battle that saw him lead the race for several laps.

The Spaniard regained first place but by no means was it anything less than an epic battle that was taken to the very last corner of the final lap.

Simón kept his cool and managed to hold off the battling Brit for another close finish, beating Oxford's finest by just 0.220 seconds.

Williams grab 7th place

WILLIAMS LOST OUT to BMW for 6th place in the constructors championship at the final race of the season in Abu Dhabi on the 1st November

Both of the Grove based drivers competed as well as the car would allow them but were clearly off the pace and this coupled with the usual race incidents and losing time in traffic made it difficult for the two Williams drivers. Nico Rosberg came in 9th and held onto his 7th place in the driver's standings which with all things considered and after a season like this one has been was a good effort on the whole.

Kazuki Nakajima ran a one stop strategy but didn't appear to go that well in the first stint, excessive traffic in the middle part of the race slowed him and he battled on for the rest of the race to eventually cross the line in 13th place.

RENAULT FINISHED THEIR season on a bit of a low ebb with a disappointing result from both drivers in their season finale at Abu Dhabi. In stark contrast to the fantastic venue, the Renault car just didn't have the performance needed to be in the fight for points, although they had had no overall issues with the engine throughout the weekend, the pace just wasn't there. Despite both drivers giving 100% of effort during the 55-lap race, the lack of performance from the Renault saw Fernando Alonso only able to manage 14th place. His teammate Frenchman Romain Grosjean had a fairly good start but was blocked quite a few times and suffered braking issues.

He lost a place to Fisichella and just didn't have the pace to take it back, finishing eventually in 16th position.